

### **State Records First Probable Human Case**

## **Kansas Reports WNV Activity in Birds in Five Additional Counties**

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) recently confirmed West Nile Virus activity in five additional Kansas counties, bringing the total to 15 counties with evidence of the virus. The counties with newly confirmed WNV activity are Edwards, Franklin, Lincoln, Marshall, and Saline.

KDHE previously confirmed the virus in birds in the following counties: Barton, Harper, Harvey, Johnson, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wilson counties, and a mosquito pool in Wallace County. In counties where two reports of WNV have been confirmed, no additional bird testing will be conducted and telephone reports are not needed. Birds are no longer being tested from the following counties: Barton, Harvey, Johnson, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, and Shawnee.

The state's first probable human case of West Nile Virus (WNV) has been found in Barton County. The 43-year old individual was not hospitalized and has recovered fully. The case was non-neuroinvasive (WNV fever). A probable WNV case is one in which the symptoms are consistent with WNV, but not all of the relevant tests are performed or available.

Non-neuroinvasive (WNV fever) cases involve milder symptoms of the illness that may include: fever, headache, rash, general muscle aches and weakness, gastrointestinal signs and inflammation of the lymph nodes with no other likely explanation for the symptoms. Since the symptoms are not specific, only special laboratory tests can confirm a diagnosis of WNV.

Neuroinvasive cases (WNV meningitis, WNV encephalitis, and WNV acute flaccid paralysis) involve more extreme symptoms including severe headache, high fever, difficulty walking and/or talking, coma and even death.

Most healthy people infected with WNV show either no symptoms of illness or only mild symptoms. About 20 percent of those infected show any symptoms, typically seen 3-15 days after the mosquito bite.

WNV is carried by birds and transmitted by mosquitoes that bite the infected birds, which then transmit it to horses and people. WNV is not transmitted by contact with infected people or by direct contact with infected birds or infected horses.

To be prepared against WNV, take personal precautions including use of an insect repellent with DEET, and reducing mosquito breeding grounds.

KDHE recommends the following to reduce the risk of WNV:

- Use insect repellent with DEET and wear protective clothing when practical
- Remove standing water - where mosquitoes breed (i.e. clogged gutters or unused tires)
- Use larvicide in water that cannot be drained or removed
- Change water every three days in bird baths, pet bowls, and wading pools
- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active

KDHE reminds physicians to report West Nile Virus (WNV) cases to the state by calling 1-877-427-7317.

KDHE is asking Kansans who find dead birds to call the West Nile Virus Information Line at 1-877-228-2287 and learn how to submit the bird to Kansas State University for testing. Birds being tested include: crows, blue jays, magpies, or birds of prey (hawks, owls, eagles), and must meet the following criteria for testing:

- Bird should not have been dead longer than 24 hours;
- Bird should be intact and should be placed in double plastic bags in freezer until submitted.

Callers must leave their name and number and will receive a call back with further information on what to do with the dead bird. K-State Extension agents will ship the specimens to a designated testing lab. Test results will not be released to individuals submitting birds, but birds testing positive will be reported on the WNV Web site.

In 2003, 90 human WNV cases with neurological illness were confirmed through the KDHE Division of Health and Environment Laboratories (DHEL). Of these 90 cases, 7 deaths were confirmed WNV cases. In addition, private labs reported 731 human WNV test results. Three additional deaths were attributed to WNV, but unconfirmed through lab work. In 2002, 22 WNV human cases with neurological illness were confirmed through the DHEL and no deaths reported.

For more information on West Nile Virus, go to <http://www.westnileks.com/>.